



INTERNET MARKETING FOR STAY AT HOME MOMS

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INTRODUCTION - WHY INTERNET MARKETING?

If you're reading this book, chances are you're a mom who wants to work from home. You may have made this decision for any number of reasons:

- You want to spend more time with your family
- You're tired of the nine-to-five working world
- Downsizing or layoffs have hit your industry
- You want a second household income
- You've finally decided to realize your dreams of starting your own business
- You're seeking more out of life
- You want to change the world

Do any of these apply to you? Whatever reasons are behind your decision to start working from home, it's a given that you want to be successful. There are generally two profiles we imagine when it comes to working from home:

The idle rich scenario. *Work from the comfort of your own home! Sit around in your slippers and watch the money roll in!* The Internet and television infomercials abound with advertisements from companies that promise a leisurely lifestyle and the road to Easy Street—usually with a “minimal investment” in their products or services. Some companies prey on a mom's deepest desires: no clocks to punch, limitless time with your kids, profits without effort. They promise swimming pools and mansions...but usually deliver empty bank accounts and shattered dreams.



Will working from home give you this?

The hard-working hamster wheel scenario. Gloomy statistics predict a bleak future for those who walk the entrepreneurial path. Small business represents a sliver of the American economy. 90 percent of small businesses fail within three years of start-up. The dot-com bust of the eighties erased all possibility of building a successful online business. Some are true, and some are myth, but all paint a picture of the struggling business owner who puts in ninety-hour weeks and sacrifices everything—only to realize little or no profit, and eventually resign to failure.

The good news? Work-from-home reality lies somewhere between these two extremes. Thousands of people run successful businesses from home, with more joining the ranks every day. They may not make headlines as the latest overnight millionaire successes, but they earn a comfortable living and find satisfaction in their work, while spending more time with their families and less time toiling behind a corporate desk.

So...why choose Internet marketing?

Despite the prevalent idea that online businesses are doomed from the start, there are many successful Internet entrepreneurs who know better. The Internet makes it possible to reach people all over the world. This means online

businesses can find a niche and create a successful company that would have been impossible to maintain through traditional methods.

There are billions of people online today. You only have to reach a fraction of a percent of them to become a successful Internet marketer. If you reach the right audience, you *can* create a profitable online business, and enjoy all the benefits of working from home.

This book will show you how.

CHAPTER 1 - CHOOSING A BUSINESS

Ready to get started? Here's your first step: deciding what your business is going to be all about. Of course, you'll need a product or service to sell—but it should be something people want to buy. Generating enthusiasm for your products or services will sell them better than anything else.

It's the catch-22 of Internet marketing—to be successful at sales, you need something that sells itself.

However, there's another aspect to this secret of success, and it's what allows so many Internet marketers to run profitable businesses. Here's the thing: your products or services don't have to sell themselves to everyone. Remember, you're only targeting a *fraction of a percent* of the Internet community. That's where niche markets come in.

FINDING YOUR NICHE

Niche marketing is one of the most powerful strategies available for online businesses. Creating a niche allows you to focus your efforts and offer products and services people will want to buy.

Why does niche marketing work online? Internet businesses have one big disadvantage when it comes to sales: there is no personal contact with the customer. Online shoppers can't pick up and examine your products, nor can they see your services in action (unless, of course, you're a website designer).

The deciding factors for most people when they make Internet purchases include:

- The known factor: online merchants such as Amazon or eBay
- The professionalism and appearance of the website
- Testimonials or recommendations from other customers
- Price, options, and speed of delivery
- **Whether or not they can get the products or services elsewhere**

Since you're not Amazon or eBay, you'll have to rely on the other four factors. The first three go a long way toward Internet marketing success, but the fourth is often the deciding factor. In general, you have three to ten seconds to interest a potential customer before they click away from your website. If you can offer them something different, they'll stick around for a while.

There are two steps to finding your niche: choosing an industry you love, and determining what that industry is missing.

DO WHAT YOU LOVE (OR LOVE WHAT YOU DO)

Your customers aren't the only ones who have to love your products or services. If *you* don't enjoy what you're doing, your online business is practically doomed before you get started.

You must be able to generate enthusiasm for your business. Particularly in the early stages, you will be living and breathing whatever it is you've chosen to pursue. If you get sick of it, you'll put less effort into making it work.

Other than staying power, having passion for your business helps you increase sales. When you're enthusiastic about your products or services, and you truly

believe what you have will benefit other people, that passion comes through in your dealings with customers—even on the Internet.

Have you ever worked with anyone who really enjoyed their job? Almost every workplace has one: the co-worker who has a smile and a greeting for everyone, who knows every customer by name. This person never comes in late, and never seems in a rush to leave. You can bet he or she doesn't watch the clock all day, and isn't exhausted after work.

When you have passion for your work, it spills over into every area of your life. You'll find yourself looking forward to getting started instead of dreading the alarm clock. At the end of the day, you'll feel refreshed and energized instead of drained and discouraged.

What if you can't do what you love? Maybe your one true passion is stamp collecting—an admittedly tough field to make a living in. However, even those with specialized interests can find some way to blend enthusiasm with work. If you can't do what you love, then love what you do! The avid stamp collector might consider creating an exclusive line of hobbyist equipment...including stamp albums.

You need at least one aspect of your business that really lights you up. If nothing else, the things you love will help you get through the things you hate—like when you find yourself working at two in the morning to complete a last-minute project, or haggling with an impossible-to-please client over payment details. Your passion will smooth out the rough patches and help you remember that yes, this really is worth it.

THE YOU CATALOGUE: A QUIZ

What gets you fired up? Take this quiz to help you zoom in and focus on your interests and skill areas, so you can discover the best business for you.

Note: For best results, answer the following questions honestly, and as completely as possible.

YOUR PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

- Age
- Gender
- Geographical location
- Type of home (apartment/house/trailer, city/suburbs/country)
- Number of children/grandchildren
- Ages of children/grandchildren
- Single/married/divorced/widowed
- Religion, political affiliation, family income range
- Other pertinent information

YOUR BACKGROUND

- Companies you worked for
- Positions you held
- Organizations you volunteered for

- Community activities
- Groups you belong to
- Diplomas/degrees you earned
- Classes or specialized learning programs you completed
- Any other accomplishments

YOUR HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

- Past and present hobbies
- Personal collections
- Things you've "always wanted to do"
- Your favorite books and genres
- Your favorite songs and types of music
- Your favorite movies and/or television shows
- Pets past and present
- Anything you do for fun

YOUR HAUNTS AND HANGOUTS

- Places you spend time in
- Places you'd like to spend time in
- Your dream vacation destinations
- Your favorite restaurants
- Your favorite stores

YOUR FRIENDS' DEMOGRAPHICS

- Your friends' ages
- Your friends' geographic locations
- Your friends' family types, styles and sizes
- Personality traits you like
- Personality traits you dislike
- Where your friends live
- Where your friends work
- Activities you enjoy with your friends
- Hobbies you share with your friends



Your number one reason to work from home: missing this

DISCOVERING THE MISSING LINK

Once you've determined the best area for your business, it's time to do some brainstorming and research. Find out what your industry is missing, and develop a product or service that will fill that need—this will be your niche.

Before you begin your brainstorming process, keep two things in mind. One: have a notebook and pen with you at all times to write down ideas as they occur. And two: write down *any idea that occurs*, no matter how far-fetched it may seem. One of your crazy ideas might just develop into a viable niche product.

With that in mind, here are some ways to discover the missing link in your business area.

Improve an existing product. Have you ever bought something with great expectations, only to find out it didn't quite meet your needs? Is there anything related to your business topic you can think of that could be improved—and do you think you can improve it? If you can make an existing product better, you can present your improvements to the existing market.

Adapt an existing product. You can “borrow” ideas from other business areas and adapt them to fit your niche. One way to do this is to determine a common problem in another market sector, find the solution that sector uses, and then adapt the solution to your target market.

Repackage an existing product. There are hundreds of reseller programs out there on the Internet. Reseller programs generally consist of e-books and e-courses on a number of subjects, which you can purchase the rights to and then resell for 100 percent profit. However, when it comes to reseller programs, many Internet marketers end up vying for a portion of a shared consumer group, since they're all selling the exact same product to the same market.

If you're interested in reseller programs, you can differentiate yourself from the crowd by combining multiple related products into a “package.” For example, you could combine web templates with script applications and an e-book on Internet marketing to create a complete product set for webmasters. There are endless combination possibilities available through reseller programs.

Solve a problem. Every business area has problems. Some are inherent, and some are generated by industry changes that can leave gaps to be filled.

Discover some of the unmet problems in your business area by hanging around forums, message boards and blogs related to your topic. Find out what people are talking about, and try to identify what's missing, then develop a product or service that will fill that need.

Tap a trend. What's hot in your market today? Pay attention to advertisement on television, in magazines and newspapers, and on the Internet. Keep track of what types of products are generating the most interest, and then focus on your business area to find out how you can tap in to the trend.

An example: assume beauty products are currently popular (and generally, they are). If you've decided your niche market is new moms, you could write an ebook or series of tips designed to help moms with babies or young children save time and money in their daily beauty regimes.

Profit from the public domain. Every day, more copyrights expire. Books, movies, television shows, songs, and images enter the public domain and become available for anyone to use.

Public domain content can be used in a variety of ways to generate a viable business. You can recreate public domain books, modernize or alter their contents, and sell them as e-books. You can create calendars, posters, tee shirts, and other custom products using familiar public domain images. You can use public domain movie footage and audio content to create new products.

Interested in learning more about what is considered in the public domain? Use the following links to find extensive databases of public domain content:

Project Gutenberg: www.gutenberg.org

Wikipedia's public domain catalogue: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/public_domain

E-books from Project Gutenberg: www.promo.net/pg

HOT HOME BUSINESS IDEAS

Still stuck for inspiration? Consider one of these home business ideas with powerful potential for success.

- Pet-based products
- Wedding consultant/planner
- Life coaching
- Web design
- Dietary consultant
- Teaching toys
- Specialty teas and coffees
- Education and tutoring services
- Travel planning/home-based travel agency
- Cooking products/books for kids
- Niche exercise equipment or programs
- Specialty gift baskets
- Web community creation
- Virtual real estate sales
- Homemade candles or essential oils
- Home organization planner
- Hand-crafted jewelry
- Freelance writer

- Event planner
- Custom invitations and labels
- Virtual secretary
- Income tax preparation
- Homemade soaps or body lotions

Of course, you can always carve a further niche into one of these ideas to make it your own.



Carve your niche from the comfort of your own home

CREATING A PRODUCT

Now that you've identified your niche and found a need to fill, it's time to create your product. What will you sell?

OH, THE POSSIBILITIES!

There are many types of products and services that lend themselves to Internet marketing. You should determine what format your product or service will take according to how your information can best be presented.

E-BOOKS, E-COURSES AND AUDIO PRODUCTS

The majority of Internet marketers use e-books or e-courses as their primary product set. This is because e-books automatically work with an online business: like the Internet itself, they don't exist outside a computer hard drive.

E-books are the easiest and fastest Internet marketing business to set up and run. There are several web-based tools designed to make e-book production and distribution easy. When you sell e-books, you don't have to worry about production and shipping costs; your product can be delivered to customers via e-mail. With autoresponders, you can set up your website to automatically deliver e-books as soon as a customer makes a purchase.

One of the benefits of e-books to customers is the resources they can provide. E-book text can be linked directly to websites with more information and online tools, and since people read e-books on their computers, the easy access to resources and bonus features is often a high selling point for e-books.

Where can you get e-books? You can write an e-book yourself. You can create an e-book based on a public domain work by updating and revising the content. You can also obtain master resell rights to e-books on a number of subjects.

If possible, the best idea is to write an e-book yourself (or outsource someone to create an exclusive e-book based on your ideas, an option that will be discussed further in this chapter). Remember, one major factor in the buying decision process is whether your product or service is available elsewhere. When you create an exclusive product, you have the potential to capture more of your target market.

Never written a book before? You may have no idea how to get started. For beginners, the best approach is to break the project into several manageable steps and develop each section one at a time. Here is a simple guide you can follow to help you create your own original e-book:

- *Step 1: Create an outline.* Working from an outline helps you corral your ideas with a manageable framework. List your main ideas, and then break each one into subsections that relate to the main section. It may be helpful to make your outline overly detailed, and then cut back those sections you find you don't need.
- *Step 2: Research, research, research.* The more you know about a subject, the easier you will find it is to write about it. You can find more than enough information online to supplement your own knowledge. Seek out several resources that relate to each of your subsections and read up on each one before you start writing that section. Remember to bookmark resources as you find them for easy access later on, and also for inclusion as bonus resources in your e-book.
- *Step 3: Treat each subsection as an article.* Writing an article sounds less daunting than an entire book, doesn't it? The subsections of your e-book should each resemble an article, with a beginning, middle and end. When you treat your e-book like a series of articles, working on one section at a time, it becomes easier to reach the finish line. You'll find a more detailed discussion on writing articles in the "Article Marketing" section of this book.
- *Step 4: Incorporate additional information.* Links to other resources, tables of information, case studies, images, and breakout boxes are all great supplemental material for e-books. As you research your topic, keep a list of information your e-book should include and create a separate file for it to incorporate later.
- *Step 5: Edit, revise and clean up.* Once you have all of your subsections written and compiled in one document, read the whole thing from start to

finish. Be on the lookout for typos, spelling and grammar errors, and make sure the text flows and makes sense. You may even want to hire a professional editor or proofreader—or at the very least, ask a friend to read the final draft and point out any errors or sections that don't seem right. Professionalism counts!

If you're not convinced of your writing abilities, but you still want to write your own e-book, there are plenty of online resources for writers you can learn from. Here are some places to start:

"7 Day eBook" - [Write Your Own eBook... in as little as 7 Days](#)

Knowledge Hound: <http://www.knowledgehound.com/topics/writing.htm>

PoeWar Writer's Resource Center: www.poewar.com

Writers Write: www.writerswrite.com

Write101: www.write101.com

E-book production: After you've written the text for your e-book and gathered all of the resources you want to include, you have to put it all together into a final product. There are several ways to go about creating an e-book for distribution, depending on your skill level and budgetary limits.

Do-it-yourself: You can format an e-book in a word processing program such as Microsoft Word, and then create a PDF from the document that will become your final product. PDFs, or Portable Document Files, are the most common file format for e-books; they are viewed using the free Adobe reader, and their contents are difficult to tamper with. If you have or plan to buy the full Adobe

Acrobat software (which costs around \$300), you can create as many PDFs as you'd like and edit the contents as often as needed.

You can also create a PDF using a free online converter program. If you use a converter, you won't be able to edit the file after creation, so you will have to make sure your document appears exactly the way you want it to in your word processing program. You can find free online PDF conversion programs in several places. Here are just a few:

PDF Online: www.gohtm.com

Cute PDF: www.cutepdf.com

PDF4Free: www.pdfpdf.com/pdf4free.html

Click to Convert: www.clicktoconvert.com

PDF995: www.pdf995.com

Use an e-book creator program: There are several desktop publishing programs you can use to automatically format and create your e-book, either in PDF or HTML (web page) format. Most desktop publishing programs and e-book creation software are simple drag-and-drop interfaces (as opposed to HTML programming), and quite easy to use. Some programs are free; many require a minimal investment, but you'll be able to create as many e-books and new versions as you'd like with them.

Here's a sampling of available desktop publishing and e-book creators:

Easy Ebook Creator: www.easyebookcreator.com

Ebooks Writer: www.ebookswriter.com

Ebook Compiler: www.ebookcompiler.com

Microsoft Publisher: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/FX010857941033.aspx>

(note: Microsoft Publisher comes bundled with some version of the Microsoft Office software suite; you may already have this program on your computer!)

Of course, if you choose a reseller program, the e-book is already created for you. You would therefore put more effort into marketing a reseller program because the competition is stiffer.

E-courses: E-courses are another popular Internet marketing product. An e-course is a series of informational and/or interactive articles, usually delivered via e-mail. If you'd like to market an e-course, it is a good idea to sign up for a few free e-courses (there are many available online) to get a feel for how they work.

If you've written an e-book or developed a new version of a public domain product, the simplest way to create an e-course is to break the book up into several sections and deliver them to customers one at a time, using an autoresponder program.

For an interactive e-course, consider creating a forum and allowing "students" to enroll. You can post the lessons to your forum and be available to answer questions, give and grade assignments, or schedule class chats.

Audio products: Unless you're an aspiring singer/songwriter, you'll generally be interested in audio products that fall into one of two categories: repackaged public domain material, or audio reseller programs. Creating exclusive audio content is a difficult and expensive process for most people.

Public domain audio products are often compilations of songs, movie soundtracks, or radio plays. There are generally two ways to package audio content: CDs and downloadable files. Individual songs work well as downloads, but larger files are often better as CDs. Many home computers come equipped with CD burners, so you can create CDs yourself. You can also outsource CD production and have bulk orders created for you.

There are also audio reseller programs you can purchase. Most audio reseller programs are in downloadable format and used compressed files to decrease download time.

SERVICES AND CONSULTING

Is your niche starving for services? You can create a service-based online business using your skills, interests and hobbies. Because you don't have to create a product, service-based online businesses usually let you get started faster. Of course, you must be able to provide the services before you open your website for business.



The Internet: Finding customers around the world

There are many types of service and consulting businesses that lend themselves well to Internet marketing. A few examples include:

- Freelance writing
- Resume writing
- Income tax preparation
- Life coaching or consulting

- Website design
- Telephone answering services
- Virtual office assistants
- Database preparation
- Photo restoration and manipulation

If you plan to start a service-based online business, you don't have to create a product—but you should make samples of your work available in most cases. Don't have any experience yet? You can still create samples that prove you have the necessary skills to do the job. Be creative: if you're starting a resume-writing service, interview a few friends or family members and create resumes for them. Use your own home photographs to showcase your digital restoration and enhancement skills.

For service businesses, it's important to develop a fee schedule ahead of time that states how much you'll charge for various services you offer. This not only allows customers to know how much they'll be paying you; it also helps you avoid scrambling for a price quote when a customer asks: "How much will it cost if I want so-and-so done?" Take into consideration the amount of time it will take you to complete each service and set yourself a reasonable hourly rate.

PHYSICAL PRODUCTS

Got a great idea for a gift or gadget? Designing and selling your own products online can be fun and rewarding, especially when you're able to reach a global niche market.

If you plan to sell a physical product, there are several things you must take into consideration during your business planning stage. First, ensure that you have a

workspace dedicated to production. Especially for moms with small children at home, leaving your products lying around can spell disaster. You must be able to fulfill your orders promptly with quality products, or you risk losing the trust of your customers.

Second, you have to determine how you'll deliver your product to your customers. For example: you can't e-mail homemade fudge, so you will have to invest in packaging that will protect your product through postal mail or UPS delivery. You'll also have to plan a time to make deliveries, so you're not rushing off to the post office four times a day. It's a good idea to keep postal supplies on hand to package your products. You can also arrange for home pickup through the post office, UPS, or Fed-Ex.

Finally, don't forget to factor in the cost of packaging and shipping to your final price. Most Internet businesses charge separately on a per-order basis for shipping, but you should keep in mind that boxes and bubble wrap don't grow on trees. Forgetting to incorporate packaging costs can often mean a loss of profits for your business.

BONUS! Planning on selling an exclusive e-book, audio course, original gift item or public domain based product? Here are two powerful resources that can simplify your product creation and sales process:

Lulu – www.lulu.com: Lulu is a free self-publishing service that allows you to create e-books, physical books, CDs, DVDs, calendars and more. You upload your files, and Lulu handles the production and distribution for you. You can list your products on Amazon, create your own Lulu storefront, advertise and promote, and edit your products any time.

Café Press – www.cafepress.com: Simply the easiest way to create and sell hundreds of custom products, Café Press allows you to design and sell tee

shirts, sweatshirts, hats, coffee mugs, calendars, cards, home décor, buttons, magnets, clocks, bumper stickers, and more. You can create a free Café Press storefront to sell your products from, or link to them from your own website or blog.

OUTSOURCING AND PARTNERING

Many Internet marketers find they just don't have the time or the skills to do it all themselves. Fortunately, outsourcing and partnering are both common practices in the online business world. You can save time and ensure the quality of your products by giving part of your workload to someone else.

TIME VERSUS MONEY:

HOW TO SAVE BOTH BY OUTSOURCING

How much is your time worth? If you see yourself staring down fourteen-hour workdays in order to develop and run a successful Internet business, you may want to consider outsourcing.

Outsourcing simply means paying someone else to perform certain tasks for you. Of course, the turnoff word here for many people is "paying." You're starting a business with the intent of *making* money, not spending it—right?

In many cases, the money you spend for outsourcing will actually mean greater profits. By hiring an expert to handle those tasks that would take you longer due to your lack of experience, you save time—time which you can then spend doing those things you *are* experienced with. This translates to more profit with less effort on your part. If you think about it, outsourcing is like giving yourself an hourly raise.

You can outsource just about any task associated with your business. Your cash outlay will vary according to the type of work you want done. When it comes to choosing which tasks you should look for someone else to do for you, a good rule of thumb is “do your best, outsource the rest.” If a task involves skill areas you haven’t developed, hire an expert.

Here are just a few of the tasks you can easily outsource:

- Website content and copy writing
- Website design
- Website maintenance
- Internet research
- Data formatting
- Search engine submissions
- Sales letter writing

When considering outsourcing, a good formula to follow is to weigh the money you’ll spend against the time it would take you to do the task yourself. Estimate how many hours it would take you to complete a project, and then divide what it would cost to hire someone else by that number. If you end up with something around three or four dollars an hour, give outsourcing serious consideration. Your time would be best spent on other business-related projects.

TAG-TEAMING THE INTERNET MARKETING WORLD

Many stay-at-home moms form partnerships to start an Internet business. There can be several advantages to working with another stay-at-home mom who shares your visions, ideals, goals, and work habits.

The biggest advantage to partnering is that you won't be going at it alone. It's always good to have someone else to rely on when you can't handle everything yourself. A good business partner can help to ease the isolation of running an online business.

Another advantage to partnerships is the ability to partner with someone whose skills complement yours, rather than compete with them. For example, if you have solid, well-developed products but no clue when it comes to creating a website or navigating the Internet, you could partner with another mom who possesses strong Internet skills. Good partners fill the gaps in each others' skill sets to form a well-rounded and viable business.

Most Internet marketers kiss the idea of sick days and vacations goodbye—at least for the first few years of operation. With a partnership, you have someone to cover for you if you need to take a few days off. Solitary business owners don't have that luxury, and often end up outsourcing work when life's unavoidable delays catch them unawares.

However, before you determine that partnerships are all sunshine and roses, you should be aware that there are disadvantages and even dangers to forming a partnership. If your partner loses interest or fails to pull her own weight, you could end up shouldering the majority of the workload and still splitting your profits. Also, partnership breakups are notoriously nasty affairs for many people—think

divorce here. Partners have an equal stake in the business, and when they're forced to part ways, the division can get ugly.

For this reason, it is important to be cautious when entering a partnership. Don't agree to partner with someone you don't know. You should only enter a partnership after you've built a strong relationship and you've both had a chance to become familiar with each other's work habits, interests and dislikes, personal styles, and skill levels.

With the exception of spousal teams, family members rarely make good business partners. Disastrous disagreements between family members are practically inevitable. Unless you are intimately familiar with a family member's business acumen, it's a bad idea to partner with a relative.

In all partnership cases, it is imperative that you legalize the partnership before you begin the business. You need a contract that spells out exactly who controls what portions of the business, what the profit split is (usually 50-50), and who gets what in the event of dissolution of the business. Be sure your partnership contract is reviewed by a legal professional, signed by both parties, witnessed and notarized, and make sure each partner has a physical copy of the final, signed contract.

FINDING A MENTOR

One of the best ways to learn business success is directly from a successful businessperson. Finding a mentor can be an advantage to your Internet business in many ways. It is important to understand that a mentor is not a partner. Mentors have no stake in your business other than a desire to help you succeed,

and in the event that you and your mentor part ways, he or she will not be able to take part of your business along.

For this reason, it is important to respect and value your mentor. A person who agrees to be a mentor will realize no financial gain for their invested time, and being rude or oblivious to them will only end the relationship with nothing gained for either of you. Conversely, a mentor who is rude or patronizing to you is not worth your time.

How can you find a mentor? Start by identifying some successful online businesses—they can be related to the industry you've chosen to start your business in, but they don't have to be. In fact, you may want to find a mentor who runs a business that is complementary to yours, rather than in direct competition with it. They'll be more likely to agree if there is a potential that their business will benefit from association with yours.

Your next step should be to contact the business owners you've identified and ask them whether they would consider mentoring. Many business owners would be flattered by such a request. You can initiate contact via e-mail. With your initial request, include a brief description of what you'd like to gain from the mentor relationship. Don't be too demanding (I want to find out all your secrets on building a successful pet care product website); instead, try to list a handful of specific things you would like more information on (I'm interested to know the best ways to find pet related resources/how to get good pet graphics for my website/some of the biggest pet care product suppliers who run affiliate programs). If you can offer anything in return for the mentor's guidance, include that as well.

Once you have someone who agrees to mentor you, then you and your mentor should work out a schedule together: the best way for you to get in touch with your mentor if you have questions, how often you will contact each other,

whether you will be able to have regular “meetings” (often telephone conversations or instant chat messaging sessions) to discuss progress.

You may be able to find a mentor through the Small Business Administration’s SCORE program. The SCORE program matches new and startup business owners with successful former business executives in mentor/pupil relationships. You can find out more about SCORE and apply for the program at www.score.org.

CHAPTER 2 – IMPLEMENTING A BUSINESS

When you open any business, even an Internet business, you should make it official. This not only satisfied Uncle Sam, it also helps you and your family realize that your business is real, and therefore important.

The next step is actually building your business. Since you don't have a physical storefront, this means your website. Your website is your business: it is often the only contact customers will have with you, and it requires as much planning and design as an actual building would.

In this chapter, you'll also learn how to use affiliates and autoresponders to boost your profits and automate your operations, so you can make more money with less effort.

HANGING OUT YOUR SHINGLE

For most small businesses, getting started is simple as choosing a name and filing a form. However, you also have to decide whether to incorporate, and learn how to navigate the occasionally crooked roads of business income tax.

MAKING IT OFFICIAL

If you intend to make more than \$600 a year through your Internet business, registering your business with your local county clerk's office is an advisable

idea. You must report any income source that exceeds \$600 on your tax returns. Though you can include your business earnings under “additional income,” you’ll usually pay less taxes if you have an actual business on file—and avoid a potentially nasty confrontation with the IRS when they ask you where all your “additional income” came from.

To register as a business, you need to pick a business name and file a form with the county clerk. The name of your business doesn’t have to be the same as your website domain (naming website domains will be discussed further in this book). You can name your business anything you want. If you have a service-oriented business, you might decide to call it “(Your Name) Consulting.” In any case, you should have several business names you can choose from in case the one you want is already registered in your county.

When you’ve chosen a name, head to your local county clerk’s office and file for a business certificate, also called a DBA (Doing Business As). You will have to pay a one-time processing fee, generally ranging from \$30 to \$60, to file this form. The county clerk’s office will usually provide you with two official copies of the certificate; additional copies cost \$1 to \$5 depending on location. It’s a good idea to pick up a few additional copies while you’re there.

Brick-and-mortar businesses are required to display their business certificates in a prominent place within their place of business. Because you’re running an Internet business, you don’t have to do this. However, you should keep your business certificate accessible to you, as you may find yourself needing it on occasion.

YOU, INCORPORATED

Once you've filed a DBA, you are officially considered a sole proprietorship. Sole proprietorships are one of the four main forms of businesses; the others are partnerships, C-corporations, and S-corporations. The main differences between these types of businesses lie in the income tax and business liability laws that affect each one.

Sole proprietorships are the most popular forms for small businesses to take. They adhere to the simplest laws and require less paperwork than the other forms. In a sole proprietorship, you as the business owner have complete control. You have the final say in all business matters—and you are also responsible for everything that happens within your business. The sole proprietorship form is the best choice for part-time businesses or those meant for supplemental income.

While the advantages of a sole proprietorship lie in its simplicity, there are some disadvantages, particularly for businesses with high profits. When a sole proprietorship's profits pass a certain amount, the income tax levied against earnings approaches 50 percent. Also, business owners with sole proprietorships are personally liable for the business—which means that if your business fails or declares bankruptcy, and you owe money to suppliers or customers, your personal assets can be used to repay your debts. This doesn't happen often, but it does happen.

Partnerships are basically businesses with two (or more) sole proprietors. As discussed previously, partnerships can be complicated business forms. If you plan to set up a partnership, you must engage a legal professional to help you form the business.

If you anticipate building a strong, profitable online business, you should consider incorporation. When you form a corporation, you will not only pay lower taxes (20 to 25 percent, as opposed to up to 50 percent), you will also shield your personal assets from your business liability. This means if your business fails, your creditors can't seize your house or your car to satisfy your debts. The drawback to incorporation is the initial cash outlay: it can cost from \$200 to over \$1000 to file for business incorporation.

There are two forms of incorporation: C corporations and S corporations. For most Internet businesses, the C corporation is the best choice. The difference between the two types of corporations is, again, a matter of taxes: with a C corporation, all income tax is the responsibility of the primary shareholder—you, the business owner. In an S corporation, also referred to as a “pass-through,” some of the tax responsibility passes to other shareholders.

If you end up less responsible for taxes with an S corporation, why is a C corporation the better choice? The answer is simple: how many shareholders are you planning to have in your company? If you're like most beginning business startups, you probably responded with, “What's a shareholder?” The rules and regulations for S corporations are extremely complicated, and generally cause nothing but headaches for single business owners. Also, the tax savings are miniscule at best. With a C corporation, all of the business control still rests with you.

SERVING UNCLE SAM

Income taxes are probably right up there on your list of things not to look forward to, right along with root canals and changing the litter box. Of course, for many moms, income tax filing results in a decent refund check. If you start your own Internet business, will you have to say goodbye to those annual income infusions?

Not necessarily. Although filing for income taxes is more complicated when you're a business owner, there are a lot of things you can do to ease the process and make sure that even if you don't end up getting money back, you'll at least end up not owing the IRS a few hundred dollars every year.



Uncle Sam wants you...to make your business legal!

Here are some tax tips every Internet marketer should be familiar with:

- **Sales tax shuffle.** As an Internet business owner, you're doing business with people all over the country, and sometimes even all over the world. Sales taxes are supposed to be collected for every state you do business with. So, does this mean you have to figure a separate sales tax rate for every single customer who orders something from you? No, it doesn't! The

legal definition of “doing business” says that you are only doing business in a state in which you have a physical presence—your home office.

Therefore, you’re only required to charge sales tax for residents of your own state. In fact, most Internet businesses omit sales tax altogether to avoid confusion.

- **Deductions Central.** The idea of filling out an itemized deduction form for income taxes makes many people cringe. However, as an Internet business owner it’s to your advantage to keep track of everything you can deduct from your income taxes. This includes office space (up to 25 percent of your rent, mortgage payment and utilities), equipment and supplies, and business-related travel expenses. Driving to your local office supply store for envelopes and paper clips? Keep track of your mileage and hang on to your gas receipts; they’re deductible!
- **Automated accountants.** Good accounting software is one of the best investments you can make for your Internet business. Programs like QuickBooks and Peachtree simplify your financial records and make tax time far less painful.

You can find links to more information on small business taxes in the Resources section of this book.

GETTING A WEBSITE

Your website is your business. Creating your website is the most important phase of your Internet marketing plans. Customers will judge your business by what they see on your website, as that is usually the only contact they have.



Limitations to customer communication

There are many considerations for designing and maintaining a dynamic website that attracts visitors and converts them to paying customers. In this section, we'll discuss where to get one, what to call it, and how to put it together.

FREE OR FEE?

WHY YOU SHOULD PAY FOR INTERNET HOSTING

There are hundreds of places on the Internet that will provide you with free website hosting. You may even have free web space that came with your e-mail account, depending on your ISP (internet service provider). So why should you bother paying for a website?

One reason is that most free websites come with long, unwieldy and difficult to remember URLs. The URL of a website is the physical characters you type in to a browser's address bar in order to view the site. With a free web host, you'll generally end up with a URL that looks something like this:

http://www.freedomainservice.nametag.com/your_creative_name

This not only represents a lot of typing; it's also hard for visitors to remember. If they don't immediately bookmark your website, they may not ever be able to find it again.

Another reason to avoid free web hosting services is the lack of available features. Paid website hosting is generally inexpensive—you can get a good web host for between \$5 and \$20 a month. For the money, you'll get plenty of features and options that will allow you to create a dynamic website and offer your visitors an enjoyable online experience. Free websites often end up with low quality graphics, poor overall appearance, and navigation difficulties that turn away visitors who are used to easy one-click access to everything.

Need more convincing? Free web hosts have to make money somehow, so your free website will feature banner or pop-up advertisements for other businesses. This is not only unprofessional, it's annoying. And it can draw visitors away from your website when better deals appear.

Remember, your website is the most important aspect of your online business. The small monthly investment you make in a good web host will be worth every penny.

Here are a few inexpensive, high quality website hosts to start you out:

Yahoo! Geocities: <http://geocities.yahoo.com>

Host4Profit: <http://www.host4profit.com>

Tripod: www.tripod.lycos.com

Bravenet: www.bravenet.com

iPowerWeb: www.ipowerweb.com

PowWeb: www.powweb.com

THE DOMAIN NAME GAME

Naming your domain can be tough.

Go to <http://www.DomainAbbey.com> to get your domain name now.

A website domain—the letters, numbers and characters that appear in the URL between the www and the .com—should be easy to remember, reflect your business, and not resemble the domain names of your competitors. It also has to be a domain name that is not already registered to someone else (which means you can't be Mommy.com or Google.com).

Like your business name, have several domain name choices ready. You should also know which web host you're going to use before you register your domain name. You can register a domain for free with a domain registry, but most website hosts include the service with setup. It's less complicated to simply register your domain and sign up for a hosting package at the same time. The host will check domain availability for you during the signup process.

Your domain name should be as simple and memorable as possible. Because there are so many websites out there, you'll probably find at least a few of your top choices are already in use. You can use alternate spellings or characters to a point, but too much and you end up with something illegible. If all of your choices are taken, consider using a different domain extension. Your top choices might be available with .net, .biz, .cc or .info extensions.

TEMPLATES: WEB DESIGN FOR DUMMIES

Many Internet marketers are not computer programmers, but still manage to design great-looking websites. In fact, you don't even have to know any HTML coding to create your site, thanks to the magic of templates and page design programs.

Most web hosts feature page design programs that allow you to drag and drop pictures and text on your web pages. Many also come with templates: pre-designed page layouts with a unified look and customizable blocks of text, web buttons, and image placement.

You can also use a program like Microsoft FrontPage or Dreamweaver to build your pages with an easy user interface and upload them to your server. Using one of these programs, you can save and make changes to your pages on your computer's hard drive.

What makes a good website design? When planning your page layout, keep these considerations in mind:

- **Clean, clutter-free pages.** Websites with too much text or too many images are confusing and difficult to read. Most Internet users won't bother trying to sort through clutter; they'll simply look for another site.
- **Easy navigation.** Most websites have many different pages. It should be easy for your visitors to navigate from page to page on your website. The best way to do this is to include a navigation bar on every page that links to the rest of the site, either down one side or across the top.

- **Unification.** It's a good idea to use the same color and font scheme for all of your website pages. This makes your site look professional and helps to reinforce your business image.
- **Fast loading.** Lots of images and flash animation can make a great-looking website—but if your pages take too long to load, many Internet users won't wait. Instead of loading up on the graphics, choose a few powerful images that represent your business or products.

Even if you use templates or page design programs to build your website, it's a good idea to have a passing familiarity with the basics of HTML code. For instance, if you plan on using affiliate programs with your business, you may have to be able to paste snippets of code into your page to display the links.

HTML—hyper text markup language—is the underlying computer code that generates websites. You may have seen examples of HTML code in your e-mail. If you've ever gotten a bounced message from another e-mail server, you probably noticed a long block of nonsense text and characters following the server message. That's what HTML code looks like to non-programmers: one big mess.

However, with a little bit of knowledge, you can demystify some of the code. Here is the HTML code for a link to the Google main page that displays the text "The 'net's number one search engine!"

```
<li><a href="http://www.google.com" target="_blank">The  
'net's number one search engine!</li>
```

When this string of code is embedded in your website's template, this is what appears on your page:

[The 'net's number one search engine!](http://www.google.com)

This particular code opens the link in another window, leaving your page open in the visitor's browser. Once you become familiar with the basics of HTML coding, you may be surprised at how easy pasting code into your template can be. To learn more about HTML coding, check out the Resources section in this book.

ON AFFILIATES AND AUTORESPONDERS

Affiliates and autoresponders are tools that help you supplement your Internet marketing business. Affiliate programs can provide you with extra streams of income, while autoresponders simplify running your business and bring in more money by saving you time.

THE WHYS AND HOW'S OF AFFILIATE PROGRAMS

With affiliate programs, other websites pay you to direct traffic to their site. The way it works: you place a link that contains an affiliate code on your website. Every time someone clicks the link, you earn money. Usually it's just a few cents per click, but those clicks can add up—and some affiliate programs will pay a percentage of purchases made by visitors from your affiliate links.

It's hard to build an entire business around affiliate links, but they can create a nice supplemental income for your website. Here are some hints on running successful affiliate programs:

- Build your website content. This is the information your website contains for your visitors, such as articles and other resources. Most affiliate programs will only accept websites offering quality content that relates to

their site. A popular example of this is the Amazon affiliate program. If you can relate your products or services to something offered on Amazon, usually books, you can sign up for their affiliate program.

- Choose complementary affiliate programs, not competitive ones. If your website is geared for new moms, and your main product is an e-book featuring time-saving beauty tips, you wouldn't want to enroll in an affiliate program for a website about beauty tips. Instead, look for affiliate programs that target new moms in a different area, such as natural baby food or infant sleeping tips.
- When you've selected your target affiliates, contact them and explain why your website would benefit their customers. Affiliate programs will also often include links to your website from theirs, and they don't want to promote businesses their customers wouldn't like. It's bad for their image, and for yours. Be sure you have plenty of content on your website before you contact affiliate programs.
- Place links wisely on your pages. Many websites create a separate page for affiliate links. This strategy has limited effectiveness, as not everyone will visit your "links" or "resources" page. Instead, consider featuring a few of your best affiliate links on your website's home page. Another good strategy for maximizing your affiliate links is to place them within the text on your website. For example, on a website about time-saving beauty tips for new moms, you may have an article or blurb about conquering under-eye shadows resulting from sleepless nights. At the end of this information, you could include a sentence that says, "Click here to learn more about helping your baby sleep through the night," and hyperlink the words "click here" with your affiliate code for the website on infant sleeping tips.

There are thousands of online affiliate programs to choose from, so you should be able to choose those programs that work best with your business. Also,

remember that the more traffic you generate for your website, the more likely you will be to make money with affiliate programs.

AUTORESPONDERS:

MAKE MONEY WHILE YOU SLEEP! (SORT OF)

An autoresponder is a software program that does just what its name suggests: automatically responds, specifically to e-mails. You've probably seen autoresponders in action, even if you didn't know what they were. Any time you send an e-mail and receive an instant response—such as when you sign up for a newsletter or request a password reminder—the address you sent the message to was linked to an autoresponder program.

For many Internet marketers, autoresponders are invaluable time-savers. Webmasters use autoresponders for dozens of different tasks, including:

- Requests for more information about a product or service
- Password retrieval
- Newsletter and e-zine delivery
- Multi-part e-courses
- Customer support
- Opt-in mailing lists
- Visitor follow-ups
- Invoice, receipt, and electronic product delivery

Autoresponders can automate many of your most time-consuming tasks. You can configure an autoresponder to deliver the same message each time an e-mail is sent to the address, or to deliver a series of messages on a timed basis.

There are many autoresponder programs available online, with different available features and levels of customization. Some autoresponders are free, and you may even have autoresponder capabilities included with your e-mail account. However, like free websites, many free autoresponders use third-party advertisements to generate income.

You should choose the autoresponder program you'll use according to the tasks you plan to assign to them. If you're only using an autoresponder for simple functions like information requests or opt-in list building, you should be fine with a free autoresponder. However, if you plan to make heavy use of autoresponders, you may want to consider investing in a paid autoresponder service or program.

Here's the best autoresponder service on the 'net:

Automatic-Responder: <http://wwwAutomatic-Responder.com>

CHAPTER 3 – MARKETING A BUSINESS

After you've chosen a business and set up your website for operation, you're ready to "go live" and start marketing your business. This is the phase where you start drawing visitors to your website and converting those visitors to paying customers.

It takes time to build a successful website, so you shouldn't expect an explosion of traffic and sales overnight. However, you can steadily increase your online presence and create a marketing campaign that will seem like an overnight success when your efforts pay off.

You should plan to spend as much time marketing your business as you do in developing it. The best marketing plans are built around your efforts and networking, rather than the amount of money you spend on advertising. Most advertising programs that promise instant results for a fee are not worth the expense—only time and effort will build your Internet presence.



Learn to reach beyond your desk

The key to getting website traffic lies in the amount of exposure you have. The more often your website appears on search engines and other websites, the more people will see it. Internet consumers generally must “see” your marketing message three to ten times before they’ll visit your website. If they come across links to your business on several websites they’re familiar with, or find it in the top search engine rankings, they will trust that your business is reputable and worthwhile.

How do you spread your URL across cyberspace and get visitors to click on it? This chapter will discuss proven strategies to gaining website traffic you can use to launch a successful online business.

SEARCH ENGINE STRATEGIES

Search engines are still the biggest and best way to get traffic to a website. There have been many strategies developed by webmasters to boost search engine rankings and get their websites seen. Some of these strategies worked when the Internet first became popular, but as online technology evolved, many of the search engine techniques no longer achieved results.

In order to optimize your website for search engine rankings, you should have a basic understanding of how search engines work. Programs called web trawlers, also referred to as “spiders,” are constantly searching the Internet to capture and index material for search engines. There are certain aspects of a web page spiders pay attention to, and others they ignore. Also, some web page aspects are given more value than others in determining where the page will be ranked.

Following is a brief overview of the components of a web site page, and what each component means to search engines:

- Page title: This is the series of words that appears in the top bar of a web page in a browser window. For example, Google's home page title bar reads "Google" or "Google – Microsoft Internet Explorer" (or the name of another browser program). Search engines give greater weight to page titles than page content, since it is assumed the title bar describes what your page is about.
- Meta tags: Your website's meta tags are invisible to Internet users, but not to search engine spiders. These are keywords stored in your web pages' HTML template that describe the purpose of your website. Today, search engines concentrate less on meta tags than they used to, because many webmasters loaded their meta tags with keywords to boost their rankings, which often produced irrelevant search engine results.
- Subtitles: Subtitles are any words or sentences that appear emphasized on your web page, often the titles or subtitles of articles. Subtitles are usually more important than regular content, but less important than page titles.
- Page content: This refers to all the text that appears on your website. Search engines index either full or partial text on web pages and assign relevance for searches according to the keywords they identify.
- Links: Anything hyperlinked to another location on the Internet bears some weight with search engine spiders. Including links on your pages can help to boost your rank, but it is better to have inbound links that point to your pages from other websites.
- Update frequency: Websites that constantly add fresh content and new material are indexed more frequently and ranked higher by search engines.

Because the hundreds of millions of active websites out there are constantly competing for Internet search engine rankings, and most search engines strive to index sites in a fair and unbiased manner, no one is certain exactly what search

engine spiders catalogue and index. However, there are things you can do to improve your search engine ranking and get your site noticed.

SUBMISSIONS AND KEYWORDS

Though it is true that your website will eventually be catalogued by search engines, the process can take months—or years—if you just “let it happen.” You can get your website listed faster by submitting the information to search engines yourself.

Each search engine has a different method for submitting pages for inclusion in their listings. Many of the major search engines either have a months-long wait, or don't allow submissions at all—Google, for instance, relies entirely on its web crawlers to construct its search engine database. You can find detailed information on Google's search engine process here:

<http://www.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=745&topic=356>

Despite this fact, it's a good idea to get your website listed on as many search engines as possible. This will not only increase the likelihood that search engine users will find your site; it will also create more links leading to your website across the Internet.

Before you start submitting your website to search engines, have the following information prepared:

- The name of your website
- Your business name (can be different from your website name)
- Your complete URL (<http://www.mywebsite.com>)

- A brief one or two sentence description of your website
- A longer one- to three-paragraph description (not all search engines require this information)
- A list of keywords and key phrases relevant to your website

It is possible to submit your website individually to a number of search engines. However, there are many free search engine submission programs that will automate the process and submit your information to multiple search engines at once. Here are a few multiple search engine submission programs:

SubmitShop.com – www.submitshop.com/freesubmit/100engines.html

Ineedhits – www.ineedhits.com/free-tools/submit-free.aspx

SubmitExpress – www.submitexpress.com/submit.html

1 2 3 SubmitPRO – <http://websitesubmit.hypermart.net/freesubmit.htm>

You can find many more through – you guessed it – search engines!

Keywords are still an important part of search engine science. You need plenty of relevant keywords on your web pages in order to have a shot at the top of the rankings. However, it is important to remember that placement counts when it comes to keywords.

Search engine spider programs are smart, and getting smarter all the time. They can tell when your website's keywords are not relevant within the context of your text. This is the reason the practice of keyword stuffing no longer works.

Remember keyword stuffing? It resulted in an abundance of websites surfacing at the top of search engines that read something like this:

“If you want to **make money**, you can **make money** with our **make money** program exclusive to **make money** online. Your **make money** product is guaranteed to **make money** when you want to **make money**...”

Intentionally loading your website with keywords to get the attention of the search engines will get your site ignored, or possibly even banned. It is important to work your chosen keywords naturally into your web copy so they make sense where they're placed.

ARTICLE MARKETING: THE POWER OF WORDS

Article marketing is one of the most powerful search engine strategies around. This technique provides your website with lots of fresh content, generates inbound links, and makes your website attractive to search engine spiders and affiliate programs. It also helps encourage people to stay on your website longer, get repeat visitors, and convert more visitors to buyers.

What is article marketing? The idea is for you to write (or outsource) several keyword-optimized articles that relate to your business, post them on your website, and allow other webmasters to reprint your articles on their websites or in their newsletters or ezines free of charge.

The basic steps for an article marketing strategy are:

- Write (or outsource) several articles relating to your business—the more the merrier! See <http://ArticleWholesaler.com>
- Create a resource block with a brief author bio and links to your website to be included at the end of each article.
- Submit your articles to article directories, which allow website owners to freely reprint them with your resource block intact.
- Post your articles on your website for visitors to access

STEP 1: WRITE YOUR ARTICLES

You should generate as many articles as possible that are related to your business. Therefore, it's a good idea to start by brainstorming article topics so you have plenty of material to work from. Articles can be written in many formats. Some of the most popular are:

- How-to
- Opinion
- Top ten lists
- Personal stories
- Inspirational essays
- Book excerpts or condensations

The subjects you're writing about can be applied to these formats to increase the number of articles. Let's take the example of time-saving beauty tips for new moms. Simply by applying the general topic, you can come up with:

- A how-to article on cutting your morning makeup routine down to 15 minutes (or ten, or five)
- An opinion piece on the merits of combination moisturizer and sunscreen
- The top ten quick fixes for smeared cosmetics
- A humorous personal story about one of your beauty disaster days
- An inspirational essay on the benefits of spending time with your kids

And that's without branching into specific areas of the topic. You can find a lot of great article ideas by visiting message boards related to your business area, keeping track of news items on your subject through television broadcasts,

newspapers, magazines, and Internet news websites, and performing Internet searches on your subject.

Once you have several article ideas, it's time to start writing! The most important thing to keep in mind while writing articles for your website and for distribution is to make them informative, rather than advertisements. You aren't trying to sell your products or services with your articles. Your intention is to generate traffic for your website, build trust, and establish yourself as an expert in your subject.

Why is this important? Your website visitors will never meet you, so they have to trust that you know what you're talking about, and that your products or services are worth paying for. When you write informative, helpful articles, it proves that there is knowledge behind your products.

Each of your articles should have a compelling title, well written body text, and a resource block that links to your website.

Titles: Your article title is important. It is often the first thing an Internet user will see on a search engine or your website's directory, and it must invite them to keep reading. Make sure the title explains what the article is about in a way that demands attention. For example, you could call an article "Time-Saving Beauty Tips" and probably attract the attention of people looking for time-saving beauty tips—or you could call the same article "Conquering the Morning Marathon: How to Get In and Out of the Bathroom in Fifteen Minutes" and interest far more readers.

Try using one of these "formulas" to generate a compelling article title:

(Number) Ways to (Do Something)

How to _____ Your Way to _____

The Top (Number) Ways to _____

How I (Did Something) in (Amount of Time)

Why (Subject) is Like (Unrelated Subject)

Of course, there are many more ways to word a compelling article title. You can pick up more title ideas by scanning the covers of popular magazines and the headlines in newspapers. Take notes on article titles that pique your interest and make you want to read more.

Body text: Remember all those essays you wrote in school? The structure of an article's body text is similar—only not quite so boring.

In general, web articles run between 200 and 1000 words. Each of your articles should have an introductory paragraph that summarizes the contents, followed by the “meat” of the article, and then a conclusion that emphasizes your main points. The tone of your articles should be conversational. A good approach is to use the word “you” in the text, as though you're talking directly to the reader.

Internet users are turned off by big blocks of text, which can be difficult to read on a computer screen. You should keep your paragraphs relatively short, usually from one to four sentences each. Use a blank line to separate paragraphs, and don't indent. Also, be sure to set articles in a reader-friendly font like Times New Roman, Arial or Tahoma. Fancy fonts are another online no-no for articles.

To further break up your text on the screen, make use of bulleted lists to summarize key points of information. Bulleted lists draw the eye and create space, and they can show a visitor at a glance what your article is about.

Remember to make the text of your article informative and entertaining. Don't use them to advertise your products. Your website should provide plenty of product detail on your ordering pages; the object of your articles is to entice visitors to view those pages.

Resource block: The resource block is a critical component of your article marketing strategy. This is information you should include at the end of every article you post on your website and in article directories. A resource block consists of information about you and your company, a link to your website, and a disclaimer giving other websites permission to freely republish your articles.

Here is a sample of what a resource block might look like:

Ima Businessmom provides the best beauty tips, tricks and shortcuts for new moms on her website at www.prettynewmom.com. Ima is the mother of three small children and the author of the exciting new ebook *Fixing Your Face in a Flash: Shortcuts to Beauty for Moms Who Just Don't Have Time*. E-mail Ima at info@prettynewmom.com for further information and a free beauty tip sheet.

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Whenever another website or e-publication reprints your articles, you gain another inbound link (a link that leads to your website when no return, or reciprocal, link appears on your pages). Search engines assign higher ranks to websites with more inbound links, because it's assumed the website is informative enough for other sites to reference.

A note on outsourcing: If you don't have any writing experience, or don't feel you can generate informative articles with well-placed keywords that will add to the quality of your website, you may want to consider hiring a writer or writing service to compose custom articles for you.

There are many professional writers and writing services that specialize in SEO (search engine optimized) article writing. You can have a series of articles written for you by an experienced writer who will create informative, entertaining copy using the keywords you specify.

Again, outsourcing articles is an issue of time versus money. If it would take you weeks or months to write dozens of articles, it may be better to invest in buying custom content—which you can generally have written in a week or less.

Best of all, when you buy custom articles, all the rights to the material belong to you. You can still include your own signature block at the end of the articles and distribute them as though you'd written them yourself.

STEP 2: SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLES TO ARTICLE DIRECTORIES

Once you have several articles ready for distribution, the next step in your article marketing campaign is to submit them to article directories. An article directory is an online repository of information, usually grouped by subject, which allows busy webmasters to grab free content for their sites. The catch is, the author's information and links must be posted with the articles.

Submitting to article directories is a time-consuming process, as you must send your articles in one at a time, to individual directories. However, the time

investment is worth your efforts. You will soon see a rise in your website traffic as your articles make their way through cyberspace.

Most article directories will have different formatting requirements for article submissions. For instance, some require you to wrap the text (rather than using a hard return at the end of each line) and some require a certain number of characters for each line. Be sure to read each directory's formatting requirements before you submit, or you could end up having to resend everything.

There are hundreds of article directories online, and more being created as article marketing gains in popularity. It is beneficial to submit your articles to as many directories as possible. Here are a few to get you started:

ArticleBeach: <http://www.ArticleBeach.com>

Article Avenue: www.articleavenue.com

Article99.com: www.article99.com

Article Directory Pro: www.articledirectorypro.com

Article Finders: www.articlefinders.com

Article Hub: www.articlehub.com/add.html

ArticleStop.com: www.articlestop.com

Articles4Content: <http://articles4content.com/content/submit.php>

Articles Factory: www.articlesfactory.com

Articles Online: <http://articlestation.com>

Article Pros: www.articlepros.com

ArticleResponder: <http://articleresponder.com>

BPubs: www.bpubs.com

Bytesworth.com: www.businessstoolchest.com/articles/submit.shtml

ClickForContent.com: www.clickforcontent.com

ConnectionTeam: www.connectionteam.com/submit.html

Content-Articles: www.content-articles.com

Content Tycoon: www.contenttycoon.com

Digital Women: www.digital-women.com/submitarticle.htm
DimeCo: www.dime-co.com/articlesub.html
Ebusiness Articles: www.ebusiness-articles.com
E-Calc: www.e-calc.net/submit_article.php
Expert Articles: www.expertarticles.com
Ezine Plug: www.ezineplug.com/authors/register
Ezine Writer: www.ezine-writer.com.au
Family Content: www.family-content.com/articles/submit.shtml
Free Article Search Engine: <http://articles.in/submit.php>
Free Articles Directory & Articles Submissions: www.articlesbase.com
Free Articles Zone: www.free-articles-zone.com
FreeZine Articles: www.freezine-articles.com
Fresh Articles: www.fresh-articles.com
Hot Business Articles4U: www.homebiznow4u.com/portal
How-To Advice: www.howtoadvice.com/Submit
ISNARE: www.isnare.com
Link General: www.linkgeneral.com/author.asp
MailBiz: www.mailbiz.com
Net Pro Marketer: <http://netpromarketer.com/index.htm>
Niche Content Articles: www.niche-content-articles.com
PowerHomeBiz: www.powerhomebiz.com
Reprint Articles: <http://reprintarticles.com>
Sticky Sauce: www.stickysauce.com/articles/webarticles_index.htm
The Article Shelf: www.articlesshelf.com
UPromote: www.upromote.com/newsletter/submit.html
Valuable Content: www.valuablecontent.com
Vector Central: www.vectorcentral.com
Web Articles: <http://webarticles.com>

If you would like to save tons of time check out this automated Article Submission Software just go to <http://jeremyburns.com/a/article-submitter>

STEP 3: POST YOUR ARTICLES ON YOUR WEBSITE

Your exclusive, informative and entertaining articles will provide you with the content you need to keep search engines happy and visitors coming back for more. Posting articles on your website is a great way to draw traffic, and it also makes your site more attractive to affiliate programs.

Where should you post your articles? Your front page is a good place to start. You can place a compelling article on your index page to hook visitors fast. If the article is particularly long, consider displaying the title and the first few paragraphs on your front page, and then linking both the article title and a “Click here to read more” line at the end to the article’s permanent page.

Rotate the articles that appear on your index page often; at least once a week. This will give visitors something new to look forward to and keep those search engine spiders indexing your site. If possible, try to post a timely article on your front page; for example, toward the end of December you can feature an article on special holiday beauty tips for ultra-busy moms.

You should also create a resources section that lists all of your available articles. Be sure to place a link in your website’s navigation bar that leads to a directory page. You can make your article directory a straight list of linked titles, or structure them the same way you would abridge an article for your home page.

Each of your articles should have a separate permanent page with links that lead to other related articles as well as back to your resource page and home page. **BONUS:** Did you know that you can submit your permanent article pages to

search engines, just as you did with your main website? Follow the same steps to create submission information and get your articles listed on search engines.

YOUR SALES LETTER

One of the most effective ways to convert visitors to buyers is with a convincing sales letter that highlights the benefits of your products or services. Creating a great sales letter is an excellent strategy for boosting sales.

For great sales letter creation software you should try

<http://jeremyburns.com/freetools/saleslettercreator>

STRUCTURING A KILLER SALES LETTER

What should your sales letter look like? Just like your articles, you need a compelling title (which can also serve as the subject line of an e-mail if you decide to send a targeted electronic mailing). The body of the letter should contain short paragraphs and bulleted lists. There should be an introduction, the main part of the letter, and a conclusion.

However, in terms of sales letters, these components are better referred to as the *hook*, the *pitch*, and the *call to action*.

The hook: Your sales letter should capture a prospective buyer's attention right away. The opening of the letter should describe what is unique, exciting and valuable about your product or services. Many sales letters use a "what if" scenario for the opening hook:

Ever since your baby was born, you haven't had more than five minutes to yourself. You love being a new mom—but your skin is starting to dry, your hair hasn't seen more than a quick brush-through in weeks, and your fingernails are torn, colorless stubs. What if you could restore your former beauty regimen and feel attractive again—in just fifteen minutes a day?

The intention of a sales letter's opening is to present a common problem among your target audience and then hint that you have the solution. It doesn't give everything away; rather, it entices the reader to keep going.

The pitch: The body of your sales letter is where you explain your product or services. This section should convince the reader that your solution is just what they've been looking for. Again, you don't have to reveal everything in the body, but you should provide enough information to sway the reader toward a purchasing decision.

Your pitch can include:

- A brief description of why you created your product or services
- The aspects of your products or services that make them different from other products like them
- The problems your products or services will solve
- Any benefits your target market will realize by using your products or services

This is also the place to include testimonials from satisfied customers: “Reading *Fixing Your Face in a Flash* helped me go from frumpy to flashy and still keep up with my toddlers! –Bea Consumer” You may not have any customers at this point—but you can still get testimonials. Give out sample products or services to your friends and family, and ask them to write a few sentences to describe their experiences using them.

The call to action: At the end of your sales letter, indicate what it is you want the reader to do—visit your website and purchase your products. Special deals, discounts and free bonuses are great ways to encourage a purchase decision. You can even place a time limit on your extras to create a sense of “Act now!” urgency. A sample call to action:

Are you ready to learn the shortcuts to beauty that will restore your confidence and have you feeling good in no time? Click here to order Ima Businessmom’s exclusive e-book today, and you’ll save 50 percent off the retail price of \$19.99. You can get Fixing Your Face in a Flash for only \$9.95 with this special offer.

Order Ima’s e-book within the next seven days and receive a free special report: The Twenty Best Time-Saving Combination Cosmetic Products for New Moms. Click here to order your e-book and bonus special report now!

You can find many sample sales letters online that will help you structure your own letter for the best results. If you find a sales letter that seems particularly convincing, you might want to use it as a template to write your own.

THOSE WHO CAN'T, OUTSOURCE

Writing an effective sales letter takes effort and practice. If you aren’t convinced of your abilities to compose a compelling sales letter (and at this point you may be thinking, “I can’t even convince my kids to put their laundry in the hamper; how can I get a complete stranger to buy my products?”) then you may consider hiring someone to write the sales letter for you.

Just as with the article writing market, there are hundreds of freelance copywriters and copywriting services who have experience writing sales letters that get results. Do some research and find a copywriter or service that fits your budget and expectations.

When you hire a writer to compose a sales letter, it is always a good idea to ask for a writing sample so you can decide whether their style will work for you. Most copywriters and writing services will have samples posted on their websites; if not, e-mail them and ask for one.

The good news about outsourcing your sales letter is that the process represents a one-time payment that will bring in residual results. Investing in a great sales letter is worthwhile, as the sales it brings in will more than pay for itself.

IF YOU SEND IT, THEY WILL COME

Once you have your sales letter, what should you do with it?

If you haven't already done so, you should create a landing page for your product and post your sales letter there, along with ordering information and payment links. Again, treat this page as a separate website: use your keywords, create an informative page title, and submit the URL to several search engines.

Another way to spread your sales letter is through an opt-in e-mail list. You may be tempted to take the "easy" approach to bulk e-mail and buy a list of addresses from a list broker. However, "cold" e-mailing is about as effective as cold sales calls: which is to say, it's not effective. The most effective electronic mailings are delivered to a targeted list of people who have requested more information about your products or services.

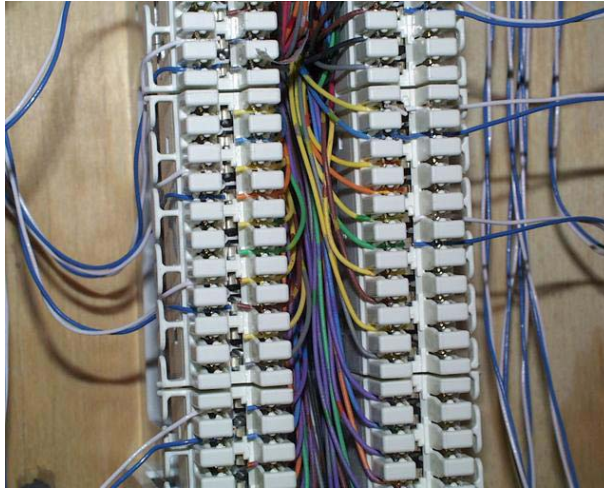
There are many ways to build a targeted opt-in list:

- Set up an opt-in form on your website offering more information on your products or services, and link it to an autoresponder program.
- Offer incentives such as discounts or free reports to anyone who signs up for your list.
- Consider publishing your own newsletter or e-zine.
- Join forums and message boards related to your business and offer members exclusive information when they sign up for your list.
- List your opt-in autoresponder address on free Internet classifieds sites.
- Join a co-registration list (this costs money, but will deliver targeted subscribers in a short period of time) such as MeMail or HitMail.

You should definitely set up an autoresponder program to deliver your sales letter to everyone who signs up for your list. To get even more mileage from your opt-in list, consider creating a series of sales letters sent at timed intervals: every other day, every third day, or once a week are usually the best intervals because they keep your business in a potential customer's sights without being overly intrusive.

NETWORKING

Networking is a powerful method of increasing your online presence and promoting your website's visibility. A good networking strategy takes time and effort, and you must be willing to help out other Internet marketers in exchange for their time and assistance.



Connect with other moms to build your online empire

THE MOM-EAT-MOM WORLD: SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY

Other Internet marketing moms are often your competition—but they can also be your greatest benefactors. Networking with other moms who have similar businesses and interests can give your online business a boost.

Moms make up one of the largest and fastest growing segments of Internet entrepreneurs. In fact, you can find several Internet communities dedicated to connecting and helping entrepreneurial moms everywhere. Most moms with online businesses are happy to help others, especially those who are just starting out in the Internet marketing world.

Networking with other “business-moms” can help you in more ways than you may realize. Internet marketing is often a lonely prospect, and you’ll find yourself spending more solo time with your computer than ever. Forging connections with others in your situation who understand the delights and challenges of running an online business helps to ease the feelings of isolation that come with the territory.

Isolation is one of the primary reasons many Internet businesses fail. No person is an island, and many moms—especially those making the shift from a corporate setting to a work-at-home business—find they miss the interaction with other adults they experienced at the office. Therefore, it's important to make some online friends who can empathize with you.

Look to the Resources section of this book for a list of Internet communities dedicated to work-at-home moms.

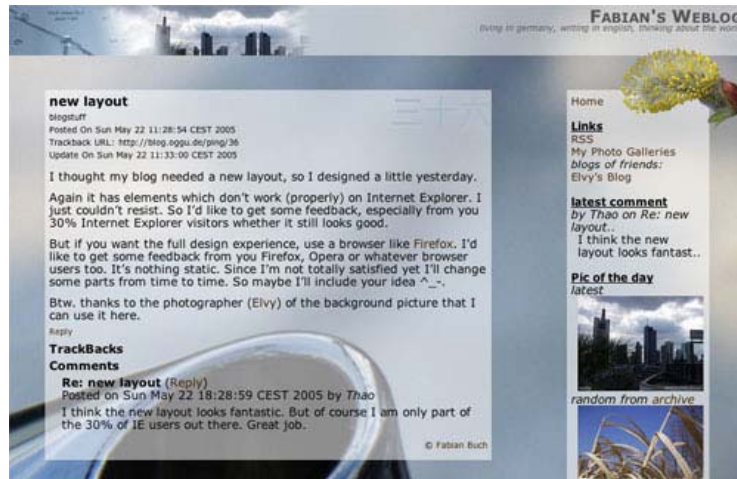
BLOGS: GETTING PERSONAL ONLINE

When it comes to networking, blogs are one of the best tools to connect with other people online. A blog is a website formatted much like a journal: blog users can make entries easily and update often, and entries are usually stamped with the time and date. Most blogs have comment sections, giving readers the ability to respond to posts and interact with blog writers.

Blogs have become popular enough to merit their own terminology:

- Blogosphere: Refers to the entire collective community of online blogs, which number in the millions
- Blogger: A person who blogs; also, the most popular blog service provider, run by search engine giant Google
- Blogrolling: A common program for linking blogs together with one click
- RSS: [Rich Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication] A system that allows blogs to be transmitted as a news feed to readers
- Wiki: A type of website that allows any reader to edit the contents; the most common example is Wikipedia (www.en.wikipedia.org), but some blog owners set up their blogs with wiki interfaces.

- Blogging: The act of creating a blog or posting entries to a blog
- Permalink: The URL that points to the permanent web page of a blog post, often used for linking purposes
- Trackback: A blog feature allowing bloggers to link posts to related entries on other blogs



Blogs take many forms – an example

People use blogs to communicate with others who share similar interests, express their opinions, interact with customers or fans (there are many celebrity blogs), market their websites, or reveal insider information under the cloak of Internet anonymity. There are many more reasons people create blogs as well.

Why should you blog? Blogging is perhaps the most intimate and personal form of web communication available. It's a great way to build trust and connect with many people. However, keep in mind that your blog should not be strictly advertising your website. The object of a blog is familiarity with you as a person. Your blog should focus on you and your experiences as an Internet marketing mom.

Maintaining a successful blog takes work. You must be willing to update your blog frequently, or any readers you attract will become bored and never return.

Many bloggers update daily; some several times a day. You don't have to post to your blog every day, but it's a good idea to make three or four entries a week. They don't necessarily have to be long posts, either; if you find an interesting article or news item related to your business, you can write a few paragraphs of summary and post a link to the item.

Of course, you also want to use your blog as a marketing tool. But rather than making the whole thing a blatant advertisement, just be sure to have some links to your website on your permanent blog template. You can also occasionally post about your business developments, or mention a new article you've just written that you think may interest your readers. However, don't post the text of the article on your blog—instead, mention what the article is about and then post a link to the article's permanent page.

In order to make your blog successful, you need to attract and keep readers. How, you say? One good method is to visit other blogs related to your business and offer thoughtful comments on their posts. Most blogging software automatically links your comments to your own blog, so other bloggers can find you. You can also list your blog on search engines and in blog directories.

Once you attract readers, keep them coming back to your blog by updating frequently and offering interesting posts and information. You can also encourage dialogue on your blog by asking questions in your posts, which readers can then reply to in your comments section.

Getting your own blog is easy and free. Most blog providers offer simple customizable templates and nearly unlimited archive space; many will let you post images and sound files as well as text. The most popular blog providers include:

Blogger: www.blogger.com

LiveJournal: www.livejournal.com

MySpace: www.myspace.com

WordPress: www.wordpress.com

Xanga: www.xanga.com

MindSay: www.mindsay.com

LET'S SWAP LINKS

Link swapping is another popular and effective networking strategy, based on a “you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours” philosophy. The general idea is that the more links you have out there pointing to your website, the more weight search engines will give to your website.

The practice of link swapping results in reciprocal links, which are not as strong as inbound links when it comes to search engines. However, these links do carry some importance, and a carefully targeted link swap campaign can boost your site with search engines and get you traffic from other websites.

The idea that any link is a good link should be discarded. Many webmasters make the mistake of creating link-rich pages that lead to irrelevant websites, with the hope of elevating their ranks. The best strategy for link swapping is to link only to related, complementary websites.

Most of the time, a simple “let’s swap links” e-mail to the webmaster of a site you believe will benefit your visitors is enough to start your link swapping strategy. There are also several link-exchange services (most are free) that will match you with related websites and automate much of the link-swap process.

You can create a links page on your website for your link exchanges. Be sure to make the page accessible with one click from your home page; many webmasters won't swap links with you if your visitors can't easily find their links on your site. You can also create a "featured link" or "featured resource" on your main page and rotate your links on a regular basis, or include links in the text of your articles.

CHAPTER 4 – TIPS FOR MOMS: MAKING IT WORK FROM HOME

Internet marketing moms who work from home face a special set of challenges: balancing work with family. In this chapter you'll learn how to meet those challenges and conquer the most common problems WAHMs (work-at-home moms) face.

CLAIMING YOUR SPACE

You need “you” space to make your business work. Creating a space that's meant just for work allows you to separate business from family. One of the most common difficulties home entrepreneurs face is the inability to escape from work. After all, everything is *right there*, and there is always something that needs to be done.

On the flip side, another common problem is the temptation to stop working to wash dishes, start some laundry, walk the dog, watch just one daytime television show, or other insert-excuse-here distraction. You must draw the line, and having a dedicated work space helps tremendously.

CORNER OR ROOM, IT'S ALL YOURS

If it's at all possible, you should have a separate room dedicated to your home office. Spare bedrooms, basement rec rooms, or even attic space can be

transformed into a functioning home office. Depending on your type of business, you may not need much more than a computer and a desk.

If you don't have a spare room, you can still have a home office. Set up your work area in a corner or half of another room. Living rooms, studies or dens are your best bets for a corner office. If you have a large kitchen, you may be able to set up there. However, you should avoid taking your work into the bedroom if you can. When your work space is located in your sleep space, you may have difficulties sleeping as your body begins to equate "bedroom" with "work."

The major advantage to having a dedicated home office room is the ability to shut the door and leave your work behind it to concentrate on family. However, if you have a corner office space, you can still physically separate it from the rest of the house. Place curtains, bed sheets or folding screens around your work area to delineate your office space so you can walk away at the end of the day.

Furnishing your home office can be challenging, especially when you have limited space to work with. The essentials for a home office include:

- Computer
- Desk
- Chair
- Paper storage
- Telephone system
- Organizational system (calendar or appointment book)
- Mailing supplies
- Typical office supplies

If you're working in a small space, there are many all-in-one products designed to help the small/home business owner succeed. Once you've chosen the location

for your dedicated office space, plan how you'll lay out your office in a way that will be convenient for you.

Keep in mind that your chair is important. You'll be spending a lot of time in it, so make sure you invest in a comfortable one. Poor posture and muscle strain is a common occurrence for those who work from home.

HOME OFFICE FENG SHUI

Even if you're not into new-age philosophies, applying a few principles of Feng Shui (pronounced *fung shway*) to your home office is common sense. Actually, though Feng Shui has only recently gained popularity in the United States, many Eastern cultures have been adhering to these principles of space, arrangement and color usage for centuries.

Feng Shui is intended to promote the flow of energy in a given physical space. According to this philosophy, the careful arrangement of furniture and the use of certain colors can produce a desired effect, depending on the chosen scheme. Even if you don't believe in the "mystic" properties of this practice, using Feng Shui helps keep your space clean, clutter-free and pleasant to work in.

The basic principles of Feng Shui are:

- **Office location.** Placing your home office as close to the front door of your home promotes good energy flow (or lets you be closer to the door to receive your UPS deliveries). According to Feng Shui principles, it's best not to locate your office in the basement because energy flows upward. If the basement is your only available space, you can improve the energy

flow by installing a ceiling fan, using bright lighting, and painting the walls white.

- **Desk placement.** Try to position your desk so you're facing the entrance to the room with your back toward a wall or corner. This is not only good Feng Shui, it allows you to see anyone coming in to the room and decreases anxiety. Never place your desk in the center of a room; this promotes insecurity—you're "wide open" to anything. Also, if there are windows in your home office, place your desk so the window is on your left (if you're right-handed; lefties should situate the window to their right).
- **Color theme.** The colors you use in your home office should depend on your type of business and your specific goals. Go for aggressive **red** if your business relies on making deals or selling; warm **orange** or **tan** if you're working in a team environment (such as with a partner or through an online affiliate or community). **Yellow** is a solid choice for any home office; it promotes discipline and stimulates clarity of thought and mental activity. If your business involves creative activity, such as writing, try a soothing **blue-green** scheme to foster creativity.

You can also accessorize your home office with color-driven feng shui themes. For example, placing a red object such as flowers in the upper left corner of your desk is said to bring financial gain. Also, a blue object in your "fame quadrant" (back center portion of your desk or office) is believed to drown your fame and should be avoided. If your office doesn't have a window, consider having a live plant in your line of sight for a calming effect.

MOM IS OUT: LAYING DOWN THE HOME OFFICE LAW

Another important aspect of claiming your home office space involves your family and friends. Even though you are home, you're not always accessible to others.

You should set clear boundaries governing your work time so everyone knows when you can and cannot be interrupted.

The best way to begin is to announce your intentions to start a business. Let everyone know that you will be working from home—with the operative word being “work.” Give your family the grand tour of your home office space, and explain that when you’re there, they should act as if you’re at an office. Of course, they should know they can interrupt you with emergencies—but be sure to specify that “I can’t find my Gameboy” does not constitute an emergency.

Many people who work from home offices find it difficult to help their families understand that what they’re doing is “real work.” Regularly discussing your business with your family can help to solidify the concept of working from home. Let your spouse and your children know what you’re doing, and give them updates on your progress. Eventually they’ll understand that you do have a real job, and they will respect your space and your time.

WORK + KIDS = CHAOS?

Working from home can seem like an insurmountable challenge, especially for those with small children at home. However, it can be done as long as you’re willing to be flexible and adaptable—and what mom isn’t?

LITTLE HELPERS

If your children are school-aged, your built-in solution is to work while they’re at school. On the other hand, even school-aged children have weekends off, not to

mention superintendent days, vacations, and surprise snow days. Here are some hints to keep little hands busy while you're working.

BABIES

- Make the most of naptime—invest in a quality baby monitor and work while your little one sleeps.
- Contact all those relatives who promised to visit with the wee one and take them up on their offers. If possible, set up a schedule for a few hours a day, several times a week.
- Schedule those tasks that require the most concentration for naptime, and bring baby into the office with you the rest of the time. Have a baby activity center and plenty of small toys and snacks on hand.
- Plan to break up your work time and put in a few hours in the evening, after bedtime.

TODDLERS

- There's that magic word again: naptime.
- Set up a television in your office and let your toddler watch educational programming for a while.
- Give your toddler an old keyboard and a mouse, and let him or her "type like Mommy."
- Create an activity box with drawing paper and crayons, stickers, glitter glue, pipe cleaners, and other craft supplies, and let your toddler go to town. Worry about the mess later.
- Keep snacks available and pre-make lunch during breakfast time.

- Squeeze in extra time by getting up earlier or staying up later.

OLDER CHILDREN

- Plan several involved activities for school vacations and days off ahead of time that your children can do themselves.
- Allot after-school time for homework so you can all work at the same time, and then enjoy the rest of the evening together
- Let older children be responsible for their younger siblings (when age-appropriate). This not only gives you more work time, it helps them develop confidence.
- Enlist your kids' help with routine tasks like preparing mail and filing.
- Plan a weekly "family night" with no work allowed, so your children know you're still there for them.

The process of integrating and separating work and family will become easier with practice. When your business is established and thriving, and you're able to spend more time with your family, all of your initial efforts will pay off for you.

TAMING THE TELEPHONE

If you have babies or toddlers at home, you've probably noticed that small children seem hard-wired to interrupt phone conversations. The instant the phone rings, suddenly your baby needs a feeding, or your toddler has an accident, or your oldest stomps on a younger sibling's toes, or your two-year-old

kidnaps your four-year-old's favorite doll. Inevitably, a ringing telephone produces a loud in-house reaction.

As a mom, you understand that "stuff happens." However, as a business person, you must present a professional front. If your business involves the occasional (or frequent) customer call, you should be prepared to eliminate background noise on the phone.

The best solution is a separate home office room; if possible, with a dedicated phone line for business. If you can't separate your calls from your home, you should use voicemail or an answering machine. Record a business greeting (and be sure to let family and friends know that your home is your business), and let the voicemail pick up all of your calls. Return customer calls as soon as possible.

THE PORTABLE OFFICE

With communications technology improving all the time, it is possible to create a completely portable home office. This is an ideal solution for moms-on-the-go or for those with limited space. The drawback to a portable office is that it can get costly. However, if you need extreme flexibility, the investment will be worthwhile.

Here are the essential components of a portable office:

- A laptop or notebook computer with wireless internet capabilities. WAN (Wide Area Network) access is becoming more popular, allowing laptop owners to log on to the Internet from a growing number of places. There are even a few cities entirely equipped with WAN capabilities.

- A palmtop organizer or PDA (personal digital assistant). Palmtops are digital devices capable of running many different software applications. They are primarily for organization and scheduling, but many of the latest palmtops can run word processing programs, e-mail applications, spreadsheets, and more. There are also Smartphones that combine palmtops and cell phones for the ultimate all-in-one device.
- A cell phone (unless you invest in a Smartphone).
- Paper and pens or pencils
- A good briefcase or shoulder bag
- A lap desk (optional, but useful in many situations)

The ability to pack up your office and take it with you can present many exciting opportunities. However, with a portable office it's important to have a backup system. If your laptop or PDA sustains permanent damage from drops or spills, it can spell disaster for your business if you haven't backed up your files.

You should also have a desktop computer with a docking station for your laptop and PDA. Get into the habit of performing daily file synchronization between your portable equipment and your desktop station. This way, you won't lose your work or your business if your portable office is compromised.

MANAGING YOUR TIME

Though most moms wish it were otherwise, there are still only twenty-four hours in a day. Good time management skills are crucial for home office success. By managing your time, you will not only increase your output, you'll also average a better per-hour rate.

BE YOUR OWN SLAVE-DRIVER

When you go into business for yourself, no one can tell you what to do and how to do it. The problem is, no one *will* tell you what to do and how to do it. You are in charge of your own work. If you want to succeed, you have to be just a little bit hard on yourself.

This doesn't mean forcing yourself to pull all-nighters on a regular basis, or denying all forms of entertainment for the sake of working. However, it does mean you need to actually do the work that must be done. The best way to accomplish this is to set a schedule for yourself, and stick to it.

Many Internet marketing moms choose a somewhat regular work schedule: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 pm. (or whenever your children are at school). For many more, this semi-traditional time table is neither practical nor feasible. The good news is that since you're the boss of you, you get to set your own schedule that works best with your situation.

It doesn't matter when the work gets done, only that it does. When you set your work schedule, treat it as though you're punching a clock. You must start work when you're scheduled, and you must stop when your shift is over. This also helps to further separate work time from family time, because you know that eventually you get to stop working.

Once you've set your schedule, post your working hours on the door (or curtain) of your home office, so your family knows when you will be unavailable.

TO-DO LISTS AND TIME SCHEDULING

As a mom, you're probably familiar with the concept of a to-do list. As a *busy* mom, you're probably also familiar with the feeling of realizing, at the end of the day, that half of the items on your "to do list" remain "to be done."

Despite its seeming shortcomings, the to-do list is a handy and effective tool for home-based entrepreneurs. The tricks to taming your to-do list are an organized approach and room for flexibility.

You should designate a time each day to create a daily to-do list. The best times are just before bed or first thing in the morning. Divide your list into "work" items and "home" items. Then, prioritize each item according to things that must be done, things that should be done, and things you'd like to get done. For simplicity, you can label them "A" (priority), "B" (important) and "C" (not critical—otherwise known as "wishful thinking").

Tackle those things on your "A" list first—especially the difficult, tedious and unsavory projects. When you get the deadlines and drudgery out of the way, you'll find you have more energy and enthusiasm for the rest of your work. After you've completed your A's, move on to the B's. Get to the C's if you have time.

It's important to cut yourself some slack when it comes to your to-do list. Anything that remains uncompleted at the end of the day can be moved to the next day's list. Looking at a list with several crossed-off items can be a delightful, satisfactory event. Your to-do list can provide you with the motivation you need to stick to your schedule and get things done.

DECIMATE DISTRACTIONS

During your scheduled work time, you must develop the ability to concentrate on work. In a home office environment, there are endless distractions and disruptions that can seem all too tempting. Be careful, though: once you leave your office “just to wash the breakfast dishes,” you’re likely to find yourself still in the kitchen at lunch time, reorganizing the cabinets and wondering where the morning went.



Tune in to tune out distractions

In addition to sticking to your schedule, there are a number of other things you can do to help eliminate work-eroding distractions:

- Choose any “can’t miss” daytime television shows and set up your VCR or DVR to record them. Plan to catch up in the evenings or on weekends.
- Uninstall solitaire, minesweeper, and any other time-draining games from your work computer. That’s right—take them right off!
- Enlist family members to help with household chores, so you don’t have to do it all yourself.
- Resist spur-of-the-moment invitations for lunch or coffee breaks with friends. Let them know you’re working, and offer to schedule a get-together ahead of time.

- Invest in an mp3 player or a good set of headphones for your computer. Create playlists or listen to Internet radio stations while you work to help tune out distractions.
- Plan and prepare dinners ahead of time. You can batch-cook on the weekends and freeze dinners for fast preparation during the week.
- Stock up on fast, convenient and healthy lunches for yourself to take advantage of as much school time as possible.

FLEXIBILITY, SCHMEXIBILITY

Flexibility and adaptability is an important home office skill. Despite your best-laid plans and carefully detailed schedules, there is always the potential for life to get in your way. You should also be flexible enough to take advantage of special opportunities to spend time with your family when they arise—the occasional impromptu trip to the beach or park picnic shouldn't be out of the question!

Build flexibility into your schedule by planning alternate work times in case your original choices don't work out. Have a contingency plan in place for every possibility. That way, even when the unavoidable delays occur, you won't panic about getting behind.

Create a fluid schedule that complements your life. If you decide to start out part-time (many moms with small children choose part-time Internet marketing in the beginning), you can work only in the early mornings, late evenings, and naptime. For businesses that require more time, consider finding a regular weekend activity such as a visit with a relative, and plan to put in longer blocks of hours on the weekend.

Weekends are great backup plans for when you lose time during the week. You should be prepared to fit the occasional weekend work session around your life, so you never find yourself caught short. Early mornings and evenings can be counted on for moms with school-aged children too.

Don't be afraid to seek child care services, especially during your startup phase. While one of your primary reasons for choosing to work from home is likely the ability to spend more time with your family, you won't be able to reach the comfort level that allows this without effort. Know that even if your children spend time with a sitter or another family member, you will eventually reach the point where you won't need this any more.



She'll thank you for your efforts!

PUTTING YOURSELF IN TIME-OUT

A mom's work is never done. This is especially true for entrepreneurial moms. As you devote your time, energy, and enthusiasm to your new business venture, don't leave out the most important part: taking time for you.

You have to take care of yourself from time to time. Not only do you need the occasional break—you deserve it! Give yourself a time-out to do something you enjoy, or just to relax, even if it's only for a few minutes a day.

Need a quick pick-me-up? Try one of these rewarding and refreshing activities:

- Go for a walk. If you have babies or toddlers, take them along for a stroll.
- Soak in a soothing tub, enhanced with your favorite bath oil scents.
- Curl up on the couch with a good book or movie.
- Reward yourself with a decadent snack. Stop working for a few minutes and enjoy the experience.
- Write a letter to a friend and share the good news that you're starting your very own business.
- Meditate.
- Spend ten minutes snuggling with your pet.
- Subscribe to your favorite magazine. Drop everything when the latest issue arrives in the mail, brew some coffee, and enjoy every page.
- Get a manicure, pedicure or professional massage.
- Arrange a "date" with your spouse.
- Take your children to the playground—and get on the swings, the slide, or the merry-go-round with them.

Most of all, congratulate yourself! You're starting on the road to a rewarding lifestyle and career independence. You can make it work. Here's to your Internet marketing success!

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RESOURCES

Now that you are on your way to becoming an work at home Internet Marketing Mom, don't stop there! The next step is the Holy Grail of Internet Marketing How To Guides... Read on for details!

"Learn how to make a life-changing income of \$100,000 to \$250,000 with your Internet business... even if you're a computer dummy!"

Review: "The Insider Secrets to Marketing Your Business on the Internet" by Corey Rudl

I've just finished reading the brand-new version of Corey Rudl's top-selling Internet marketing system, "*The Insider Secrets To Marketing Your Business On The Internet*," and frankly, I'm overwhelmed by the huge amount of critical wealth-building information he's managed to pack into these **two hefty binders and 3 CDs!**

But I guess I shouldn't be surprised; after all, when the box containing these materials showed up at my door, it weighed in at **over 10 pounds!**

That's 10 pounds of the most comprehensive **marketing strategies, test results, case studies, tools, and ideas** for generating a life-changing income online (from \$1,000s to over \$1 million) you're ever likely to read!

I'm talking about information like...

- Step-by-step advice for starting your own Internet business **in as little as 48 hours!**
- How to build a top-selling web site... for less than \$100!
- Where to find hot products to sell (in 20 minutes or LESS)!
- 100s of FREE and cheap online tools, resources, and software
- How to get 1,000s of qualified NEW visitors to your web site... for FREE!

- How to **get #1 rankings in the search engines** and get tons of FREE traffic from the "Big Guys" like Google!
- Secrets to writing sales copy that can **increase sales by up to 400% (or MORE)!** And much more!

If you're unsure who Corey is, you should know that he's been a recognized expert in online marketing for a decade now. Not only has he generated **\$40,000,000 in online sales**, his sites also attract **450,000 visitor a week!**

What's *really* great about Corey is that he can show ANYONE how to have a **wildly profitable Internet business** (that takes just a few hours each day to run)...

... ***even if you're an absolute computer dummy!***

And if you already have an Internet business, he can help YOU, too. The advanced sections of his system show you how you can **increase your sales by 400%... 700%... even as much as 1,000%!**



I give Corey's system the highest rating possible! Its 1,300+ pages of step-by-step lessons contain the exact SAME tested and proven fast-growth strategies he has personally used to generate over \$40 million in online sales -- *starting on a shoestring budget!*

And it's the SAME SYSTEM that literally **1,000s of his students have used** to drive "truckloads" of cash out of the Internet.

I strongly urge you to check out Corey's wealth-building system as soon as possible! [Click here](#) for a FREE preview.

SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES:

SOHO (Small Office Home Office): <http://www.soho.org/default.asp>

Entrepreneur.com: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/>

EntreWorld: <http://www.entreworld.org>

WorkHappy—Killer resources for entrepreneurs: <http://workhappy.net>

Home Business Resources for Entrepreneurs: <http://www.homebizlink.com>

Resources for Entrepreneurs: <http://www.vaofficesolutions.com/resources.htm>

Tools and Resources for Virtual Entrepreneurs: <http://www.virtualizeyourbiz.com>

Starting a Business: Professional Services: <http://www.startupbiz.com>

Inc.com: www.inc.com

AllBusiness: www.allbusiness.com

Small Business Resources: www.smallbusinessresources.com

SmartBiz: www.smartbiz.com

United States Small Business Administration: www.sba.gov

Yahoo! Small Business Resources: <http://smallbusiness.yahoo.com>

INTERNET MOM COMMUNITIES AND RESOURCES:

MyMommyBiz: www.mymommybiz.com

Work At Home Moms (WAHM): www.wahm.com

Internet Based Moms: www.internetbasedmoms.com

Home Based Working Moms: www.hbwm.com

MommyTips: www.mommytips.com

The Moms Network Community: www.momsnetwork.com

WAHMS United: www.wahmsunited.com

e-BusinessMoms: www.e-businessmoms.com

The Work at Home Moms Site: www.twahms.com

Cyber City Mommies: www.cybercitymommies.com

iMoms: www.internetmoms.net

EmpoweredatHome.com: www.empoweredathome.com

CWAHM: www.cwahm.com

Mothers Work at Home: www.mothersworkathome.com

TAX HELP

Internal Revenue Service main website: <http://www.irs.gov/>

IRS website for small businesses: <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/index.html>

State and local tax directory: <http://www.taxesites.com/states.html>

HTML BASICS

Funky Chickens HTML Help: www.funky-chickens.com

Why You Should Learn HTML: www.magnet4web.com/content/online-business/why-you-should-learn-html.php

HTML Basics: www.executivecoachingstudio.com/basichtml.htm

Great Website Design Tips: www.unplug.com/great/begin.htm

What Makes a Great Web Site?: www.webreference.com/greatsite.html

OTHER TOOLS ON THE 'NET

Office supplies online

Staples: <http://www.staples.com>

Office Depot: <http://www.officedepot.com>

Green Earth Office Supply: <http://shop.store.yahoo.com/greenearthofficesupply>

The Postal Store (United States Postal Service): <http://shop.usps.com/>

OfficeMax: <http://www.officemax.com/>

iPrint (business cards, stamps and more): <http://www.iprint.com/>

Internet marketing resources

Jeremy Burns Internet Marketing <http://www.JeremyBurns.com>

Products you can resell as your own <http://www.SourceCodeGoldMine.com>

Internet Marketing Info: <http://www.internetmarketinginfo.com>

Copywriting360—advice on writing web copy: <http://www.copywriting360.com>

AddMe marketing: <http://www.addme.com>

Internet marketing training course: <http://www.magnet4web.com/special>

Blog directories and search engines

Google BlogSearch: <http://blogsearch.google.com>

Blogwise: www.blogwise.com

RSSTop55: www.masternewmedia.org/rss/top55

Blog Universe: www.bloguniverse.com

Eatonweb Blog Directory Portal: <http://portal.eatonweb.com>

Web Blog Directory: www.weblogalot.com

Bloggeries: <http://bloggeries.com>

Blogarama: <http://blogarama.com>

"How to write and publish your own OUTRAGEOUSLY Profitable eBook in as little as 7 days - even if you can't write, can't type and failed high school English class!" [Click Here To Get Started!](#)